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1903



The Consolidation of School Districts, The Centralization of Rural Schools,

—AND—

THE TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS AT PUBLIC EXPENSE.

PUBLISHED BY THE STATE OF NEBRASKA,
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,
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DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

WILLIAM K. FOWLER,
State Superintendent.

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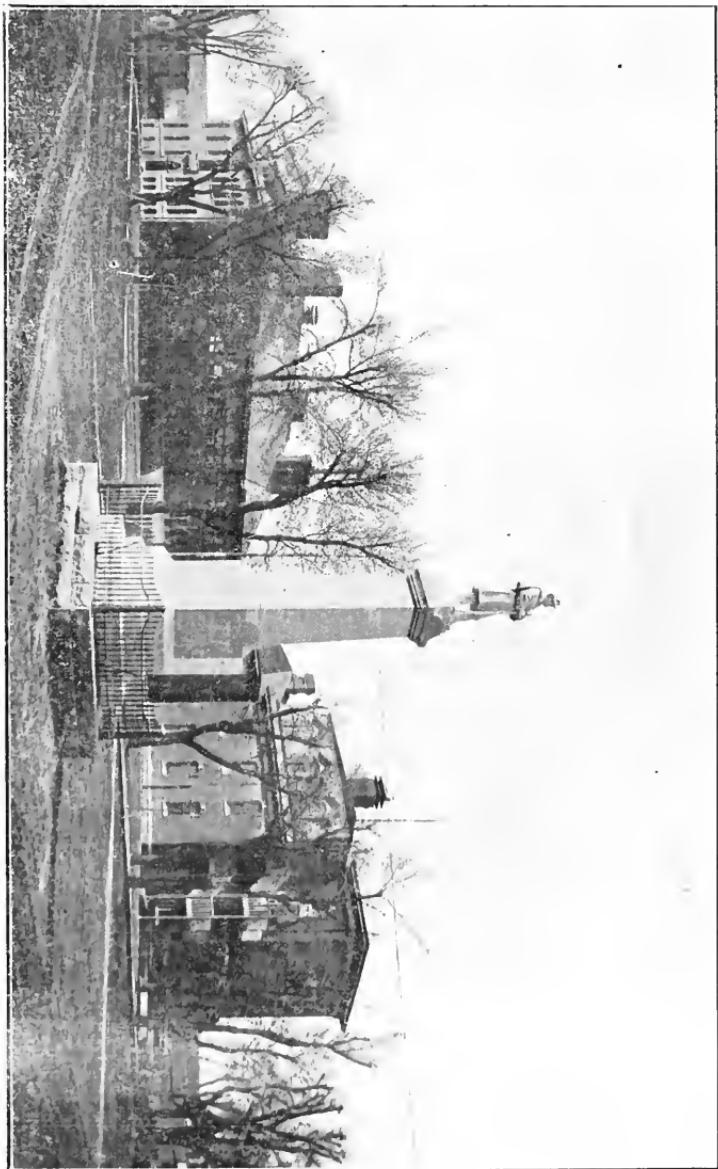
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BLAIR, NEBRASKA, CENTRAL AND HIGH SCHOOL BUILDINGS

All Grammar (V-VIII) grade pupils, nearly 400, are here centralized. There are three sub-districts for Primary (I-IV) grades.





District School No. 1, Hall County, Nebraska



Teacher's Residence, Property of District No. 1, Hall County

CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS.

William K. Fowler, State Superintendent, Lincoln, Neb.

An address delivered before the Department of School Administration, National Educational Association, Thursday morning, July 9, 1903.

This subject is usually more fully expressed as The Consolidation of School Districts, the Centralization of Rural Schools, and the Transportation of Pupils at Public Expense.

The ideal plan contemplates the discontinuance of the small schools within a given area, say a congressional township, and the maintenance of one graded school instead at some point near the center of the township. To illustrate: suppose a township to be divided into nine rural school districts, each comprising four square miles of territory, with a low assessed valuation, a high tax levy, a small, neglected and dilapidated frame schoolhouse varying from 16x24 feet to 24x30 feet, with three windows on each side and one window and a door in one end, a stove, and without basement and interior closets. This schoolhouse, if located at the center of this school district of four square miles, will be two miles by section line roads from the homes at the corners of the district. School is maintained six, seven or eight months during the year, under the jurisdiction of a board of three trustees, and in our busy western section of the country, is usually taught by a young woman under twenty-one years of age, who is paid \$30 a month for teaching or "keeping" school, building fires and "sweeping out." In this school we may find an average daily attendance of sixteen pupils, a high estimate by the way, representing all ages from five to twenty years, all grades from the primary to the high school and occasionally with two or three high school branches crowded in, and from thirty to forty recitations daily. The attendance is irregular and spasmodic, and tardiness is often the rule, children continuing to arrive until ten o'clock. Pupils are "put back" term after term by the "new" teacher, as records are usually destroyed or lost. Apparatus is either unknown or out-of-date, blackboard scanty and furniture rickety. This is the good old-fashioned "deestrick skool" taught by the new woman of twenty who has succeeded and supplanted the old man of forty—and of forty years ago!

Consolidation or centralization proposes to discontinue these small districts as separate organizations, and these rural schools and schoolhouses, and to establish in lieu thereof one central graded school for the township, housing ten or more grades in a four-room frame or brick schoolhouse, well constructed, correctly lighted, heated, ventilated, and seated, with basement and interior closets, a janitor, a principal and three other teachers, thirty-six pupils and three grades to the room, twelve to fifteen recitations daily in each room, and to transport the pupils by public conveyance to and from the schoolhouse daily. We would then have a township board of education of five or seven members, would and could pay the principal \$60.00 to \$75.00 a month and the three assistants about \$45.00 a month each. With reference to the

attendance of pupils, nine times sixteen is equal to four times thirty-six. But the attendance would be better, larger, more regular, pupils would be more punctual, and their progress provided for systematically. Their health would be better and better cared for, and their happiness would be greater.

This is the extreme view and ideal plan, perhaps, before and after taking consolidation and centralization. But conditions in many rural communities may be vastly improved by consolidating and centralizing in part, by discontinuing permanently or temporarily a school district and uniting it to an adjoining one.

Consolidation of schools and transportation of pupils is operative to a greater or less degree in the following states, either under provision of law or by sufferance:

California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Wisconsin; and in the five provinces of the Dominion of Canada under the Macdonald plan.

ARGUMENTS FOR CONSOLIDATION.

1. It insures a much larger per cent of enumerated pupils enrolled.
2. Reduces irregular attendance.
3. Prevents tardiness among transported pupils.
4. Pupils can be better classified and graded.
5. No wet feet or clothing, nor colds resulting therefrom.
6. No quarreling, improper language, or improper conduct on the way to and from school.
7. Pupils are under the care of responsible persons from the time they leave home in the morning until they return at night.
8. Pupils can have the advantage of better schoolrooms, better heated, better ventilated, and better supplied with apparatus, etc.
9. Pupils have the advantage of that interest, enthusiasm and confidence which large classes always bring.
10. Better teachers can be employed, hence better schools.
11. The plan insures more thorough and more complete supervision.
12. It is more economical. Under the new plan the cost of tuition per pupil on the basis of total enrollment has been reduced from \$16.00 to \$10.48; on the basis of average daily attendance, from \$26.66 to \$16.07. This statement is for the pupils in subdistricts Nos. 10 and 13, Lake county, Ohio.
13. It permits a better grading of the schools and classification of pupils. Consolidation allows pupils to be placed where they can work to the best advantage, the various subjects of study to be wisely selected and correlated and more time to be given to recitations. Pupils work in GRADED schools, and both teachers and pupils are under systematic and closer supervision.
14. It affords an opportunity for thorough work in special branches

such as drawing, music and nature study. It also allows an enrichment in other lines.

15. It opens the door to more weeks of schooling and to schools of a higher grade. The people in villages almost invariably lengthen the school year and support a high school for advanced pupils.

16. It affords the broader companionship and culture that comes from association.

17. It quickens public interest in the schools. Pride in the quality of work done secures a greater sympathy and better fellowship throughout the township. The whole community is drawn together.

18. Public barges used for children in the daytime may be used to transport their parents to public gatherings in the evenings, to lecture courses, etc.

19. Transportation makes possible the distribution of mail throughout the whole township daily.

20. By transportation the farm again, as of old, becomes the ideal place in which to bring up children, enabling them to secure the advantages of centers of population and to spend their evenings and holiday time in contact with nature and plenty of work, instead of idly loafing about town.

21. The teacher's work is so well organized that the average recitation period is trebled.

22. One or two large families cannot "freeze out" the teacher.

23. The farmer and his family are more content with their self-sustaining occupation.

24. Ethical culture is afforded free from the dissipations of social life as manifested in cities.

25. Parents who are observant say that the cost of shoes worn out in walking to the separate schools and the cost of medicine and doctors' bills more than pay for the transportation.

26. Transportation makes it easier to maintain a quarantine in case of disease and prevent the spread of contagion.

27. By centralization there will be fewer and better teachers in our schools. It will be a case of the survival of the fittest. Better salaries will be paid those who do teach, thus enabling a person to make it possible to acquire a high school and normal training before attempting to teach.

28. By centralization all the children of the township have the same chance for higher educational advantages, which under the present plan only five or ten persons are able to get by leaving home and going to the city.

29. By centralization we go a long ways toward the solution of the problem, "How to Keep the Boys on the Farm." We bring to the farm that which he goes to the city and town to secure. Such a school may become the social and intellectual center of the community life. With a library room, music, debating club, etc., our boys and girls will hesitate to leave home and such a school for the uncertainties of city life. Cen-

tralization will not only keep the boys on the farm but it will help to keep the big boys in the school.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST CONSOLIDATION.

1. Depreciation of property; decreased valuation of farms in districts where schools are closed.
2. Dislike to sending young children to school far from home, away from the oversight of parents; and to providing a cold lunch for them rather than a warm dinner.
3. Danger to health and morals; children obliged to travel too far in cold and stormy weather; obliged to walk a portion of the way to meet the team, and then to ride in damp clothing and with wet feet; unsuitable conveyance and uncertain driver; association with so many children of all classes and conditions; lack of proper oversight during the noon hour.
4. Insufficient and unsuitable clothing; expense to parents of properly clothing their children.
5. Difficulty of securing a proper conveyance on reasonable terms or, if the parent is allowed compensation, of agreeing upon terms satisfactory to both parents and school officials.
6. Local jealousy; an acknowledgment that some other section of the township has greater advantages and is outstripping any other locality.
7. Natural proneness of some people to the removal of any ancient landmark or to any innovation, however worthy the measure, or however well received elsewhere.
8. Less freedom of the individual pupil to advance at a rate best suited to him.
9. Saloon at the center.
10. Too long distances; bad roads, blocked in winter for weeks.
11. Invasion of individual rights.
12. If fatal diseases are carried to or start in these schools, then most all of the children of the township are exposed to them.

THE RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEM: A SOLUTION.

Consolidation of School Districts, Centralization of Schools, and Public Transportation of Pupils.

From the Seventeenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Instruction, State of Nebraska.

I have great faith in the rural school, in its powers, and of what it may do for the individual pupil, but I think the result of its work on the average does not compare with the work of the best city schools, and cannot under the present conditions. How to improve the present conditions is a serious problem, and I know of but one solution. Rural mail delivery is now spreading through this western country. Roads are being improved. Telephones are coming into common use in the country as well as in the cities. Many counties in Nebraska have organized

county telephone systems, and before long all calls for physicians, for supplies and provisions, for broken castings for farm machinery, for twine for the binder, for drugs and medicines and for hundreds of other little things will be by telephone, and thereby one-half of the time usually expended in securing them will be saved.

We must enrich rural life and increase the advantages of the farmer and his family in order to counteract the flow of humanity from country to city. A census bulletin issued last year states that the percentage of population of the United States in cities of 8,000 or more inhabitants has steadily increased each decade. It was 3.4 per cent in 1790, 12.5 per cent in 1850, 22.6 per cent in 1880, 29.2 per cent in 1890, and 33.1 per cent in 1900. The percentage of our population that lived in cities of 4,000 or more inhabitants in 1880 was 25.8; in 1890, 32.9; and in 1900, 37.3. These figures are significant. They mean that from 1880 to 1890 seven persons in every one hundred of our population moved from country or village to city and none moved back. From 1890 to 1900 four or five persons in every one hundred moved from country or village to city and none moved back. What shall we do to be saved from our great cities? Shall we permit the decay and destruction of our pure country life, or shall we endeavor to bring some of the great comforts and conveniences and advantages of city life into the country?

Now for years we have been working at cutting up Nebraska and its counties into small school districts. Schools of a few pupils are the rule, and large schools are the exception. What inspiration can the pupils of a school of three or four or half a dozen have to do good work? There is no life, energy, inspiration, emulation or desire to excel. The school is dead spiritually and intellectually, and I have seen many a small school that might as well have been discontinued as far as practical results were concerned. You may be doing well under the conditions, but what are the conditions? How could they be much worse? Poor, battered old schoolhouses, sometimes lacking paint, with cannon-ball stoves, and cheerless yards; while in our cities we are building modern, scientific structures, correctly heated, ventilated, lighted and seated, often built of brick, sometimes with stone foundations and with beautiful surroundings. Many of the best schools of Nebraska are in towns employing from three to six teachers. There they have but two or three classes in each room, with all the rooms in one building, a principal who may know what each class is doing, thereby securing better and closer supervision than is possible in larger places, and a janitor to look after school property.

Why do you not have the same in your rural communities? It is not an impossibility. Let me suggest to you what has been done in some of the eastern states. Thirty years ago in Massachusetts they began centralizing their rural schools by public transportation of pupils in vans or wagons. About ten years ago the plan had reached Ohio, and in the last few years it has spread into Indiana, Illinois, and is now being strongly advocated in Iowa. Briefly the plan is this: Instead of nine rural districts with about four sections of land each, teachers with sal-

aries of about \$35.00, and an average enrollment of twenty pupils, we have in the center of the township a brick building of four rooms, with forty-five pupils in each room, and two or three grades only. We may have a principal of considerable training and experience, who receives a salary of from \$60.00 to \$75.00, and teaches the highest room. The three other teachers receive about \$45.00 each. There is a janitor who looks after the building, its heating plant, its toilet rooms or outbuildings and the grounds generally. There may be sheds in which the horses are kept during the day. The pupils are gathered from various parts of the township by covered vans or wagons that start at 7:45 a. m., or at a stated regular time, day after day, and cover an established route, picking up the children along the way and delivering them at the schoolhouse at about 8:45; distributing them again after four o'clock in the afternoon. Where the plan has been in operation, the drivers selected are clean, capable, sober men, not given to profanity or tobacco, and are paid \$25.00 or \$30.00 per month. They furnish their own team and wagon, with lap robes, and as a rule, carpet their vehicles and provide seats; let me say right here, that in bad weather, in rain or storm or strong wind, I would rather my child would ride five miles in such a vehicle than walk one or two miles. In pleasant weather, I would just as soon have him walk as ride.

CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOLS.

To overcome the many disadvantages in the present rural school system in Nebraska, and for the purpose of giving every farmer's girl and boy in this noble commonwealth opportunities equal to those of the girls and boys of the village and city, we recommend to the careful consideration of every rural school board and to the fathers and mothers in these rural districts the consolidation of schools and the transportation of pupils. Consolidate, or centralize, the weak districts into a common central school, conveying the pupils from every part of the greater district or the congressional township to, and from the central schools by means of covered vans or wagons, in charge of clean, capable, careful drivers. Such a plan would now be legal, as the six-mile limit in the formation of school districts has been removed. And we already have the transportation law. Notice the following provisions of Nebraska School Laws.

1. One district may be discontinued, and its territory attached to other adjoining districts, upon petitions signed by one-half of the legal voters of each district affected. (Subdivision 1, Section 4, Fourth Condition.)

2. The six-mile limit in the formation of school districts has been removed, and districts may now be formed extending more than six miles in any direction.

3. The district board may (and usually should) close the weaker and smaller schools in a district and transport the pupils at public expense to any other school in the district. A board of education of a city, or a board of trustees of a high school district, by a two-thirds vote of the entire board, or a district board of any school district in this state

when authorized by a two-thirds vote of those present at any annual or special meeting, is hereby empowered to make provision for the transportation of pupils residing within said district to any other school (within said district) to which said pupils may lawfully attend, whenever the distance from such schools shall render it impracticable for said pupils to attend without transportation. (Subdivision 5, Section 4b.)

4. Or, the district board may close school and transport their pupils at public expense to a neighboring district without forfeiting the state apportionment. A board of trustees of a high school district, or a district board of a school district in this state, when authorized by a two-thirds vote of those present at any annual or special meeting, is hereby empowered to contract with the district board of any neighboring district for the instruction of (all) pupils residing in the first named district in schools maintained by the neighboring district, and to make provision for the transportation of said pupils to the above-named school of the neighboring district under the conditions named in the preceding section; Provided, That school districts thus providing instruction for their children in neighboring districts shall be considered as maintaining a school as required by law; Provided, further, That the teacher of the last-named school shall keep a separate record of attendance of all pupils from the first named district and make a separate report to the director of said district.

CONSOLIDATION IN OTHER STATES.

In answer to an inquiry for the latest phase or condition of the consolidation of rural schools, the state departments of public instruction of the several states sent the following brief expressions of opinion in addition to the printed matter hereafter referred to:

ARIZONA—There has never been any concerted action in Arizona in the matter of consolidation of rural schools; we having such a sparsely settled country and the districts being in many instances several miles apart, the consolidation idea cannot be satisfactorily worked to any extent. We have no matter, printed or otherwise, bearing on the subject. When the population has become more dense, there will be closer relations between districts and the plan of consolidation may be more seriously considered.

CALIFORNIA—There was a measure enacted at the recent session of the legislature (Assembly Bill No. 532). As yet it is only an experiment in California, but I anticipate good results from it when it shall have been tried. Of course, I do not think it adapted to many sections of our state, only to those portions where there are good roads and well populated communities.

COLORADO—Conditions are such in Colorado that we have practically done nothing in this line, but interest is now being awakened.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—As we do not have to deal with rural schools as they obtain in a state, we have no printed matter on the subject. For the same reason there is nothing I could say from a practical point of view that would be of service to you.

GEORGIA—Consolidation has gradually been going on in this state, although there have been no laws passed on this subject. The matter is left largely with County Boards of Education. In most cases they have proceeded very slowly in the matter and have obtained good results.

ILLINOIS—There seems to be a widespread interest in this state about the matter of transportation. There was no legislation passed during the last session of the General Assembly. I think, however, by the next biennial session the sentiment will be so strong that the legislature will be disposed to act.

IOWA—The work of consolidation goes forward merrily in this state.

KANSAS—Consolidation is rapidly gaining favor in this state. Where it has been tried there is no fault to find with it.

MICHIGAN—We have just secured the necessary legislation by which we are now able to centralize schools, using a portion of the public money for the transportation of pupils. That was all that was necessary, and we are now in shape to begin an active campaign and to reach some definite practical results.

MINNESOTA—I have nothing original to add to our bulletin at this time. We have but three or four consolidated districts in Minnesota as yet, but in about a dozen places schools are temporarily suspended and the pupils are being transported at public expense to adjoining districts. Last winter, upon my recommendation, this plan was legally authorized.

MISSOURI—We have not done much in Missouri along the line of consolidation of rural schools. We have a law authorizing it, but the people have not consolidated in more than four places, and only in two of these have the schools been consolidated; in the other two it is simply district consolidation.

NORTH DAKOTA—Consolidation has been tried in several of the counties in this state, and the reports which we have on file indicate that this plan is entirely satisfactory and a great improvement over the old system.

OHIO—This plan gives general satisfaction in this state where the conditions are at all favorable, and I personally believe that it is the solution of the question of better schools in rural districts.

OKLAHOMA—We are just beginning the plan in Oklahoma. It is being discussed in every county. We are having trouble, however, because most of the districts have bonded and cannot lose their identity.

OREGON—We are crowding the consolidation idea and are meeting with very much encouragement, although we have not had any districts, as yet, consolidate. It takes time to overcome the inertia of long settled customs and so we will not be at all discouraged if the movement advances slowly. I am particularly anxious that no districts do consolidate unless they make a success of it. We find the best way to get it before the people is to present it in mass meeting and have before the people maps showing the boundaries of the districts, roads, residences, etc.

SOUTH DAKOTA—So far as this department has been able to learn, the work attained in such schools has been superior to the single district system and has been a saving to the people of about one-fourth. The attendance has also been better. Especially is this true of students of the higher grades.

TEXAS—Very little has been done in this state in the way of consolidating rural schools. There are perhaps one or two counties which have during the past year to some extent tried the consolidation plan, but these few cases have not been sufficient for a test. I have in public addresses and in letters from the department encouraged the consolidation of schools. I hope Texas will soon appreciate the advantages of the consolidation plan.

UTAH—In my recommendations to the last legislature, I suggested that all school districts in a county be united in one, and that one be governed and controlled by a competent board of education consisting of five, seven or nine members, according to the class of the county. I said but a few words in regard to the matter, simply stating that in my opinion such consolidation would aid materially in unifying and strengthening our present school system. A bill thus to provide for the consolidation of the school districts was presented to the legislature, but it failed to pass. Consolidation is being effected in many of our counties, however, on a smaller scale. The central school is steadily increasing in numbers. Again, Utah's rural districts are somewhat different from the rural districts of most states. Towns have sprung up at the mouths of canyon streams. There the people live, while the farms are from one to ten miles from their homes.

VERMONT—Vermont is making some progress in the matter of consolidation of rural schools. The hilly nature of the state is a very grave difficulty in the extension of this movement. The people of Vermont are always conservative and make assured, though moderate, progress.

WYOMING—The community of Wheatland, in the county of Laramie, of this state, requested my opinion last winter as to whether or not, under the law, they would be permitted to consolidate several of the schools and to furnish transportation for pupils. I looked into the law and rendered an opinion to the effect that I believed they would be warranted in consolidating, providing, of course, they were able so to decide. Upon my suggestions or opinion they decided to consolidate, and I understand now that the same is in operation, but can give you no information as to whether successful or not. From my knowledge of the locality referred to I am of the opinion that consolidation would be more successful there than in most localities. In numerous portions of this state I do not believe consolidation advisable and the reasons are obvious.

REFERENCES.

I append herewith a list of printed articles on the consolidation of school districts, centralization of schools, and transportation of pupils,

for reference: (States with names in black type have consolidated some schools successfully.)

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CALIFORNIA—Assembly Bill No. 532, or Senate Bill No. 482, An act providing for the formation of union school districts and the maintenance therein of union schools, 1903.

CONNECTICUT—Report of the Board of Education together with the Report of the Secretary of the Board, 1899, Conveyance of Children, p. 142-145. Report for 1900, Laws relating to education, Ch. ix, Consolidation of School Districts, p. 52-60; Conveyance of Children, p. *267-*271. Report for 1902, Conveyance of Children, 186-188; Consolidation of Schools, 332-335.

FLORIDA—Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the two years ending June 3, 1900 (From reports of county superintendents) 331, 341, 352, 379, 391, 412. Summary, 19.

GEORGIA—Thirtieth Annual Report from the Department of Education for 1901, Consolidation of Districts and Transportation of Pupils, 21-23; Consolidation of Rural Schools and the Transportation of Children, by M. B. Dennis, 98-106.

HAWAII—Report of Inspectors of the Department of Public Instruction, December 31, 1902, Consolidated Schools, 23.

IDAHO—Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1900, Rural School Districts, 6-7.

ILLINOIS—Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, July 1, 1900-June 30, 1902, Consolidation of the Small Districts once more, 11-14.

INDIANA—Twentieth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the school years ending July 31, 1899, and July 31, 1900, The Rural School—(a) The Small School, (b) Transportation of Pupils, 520-587. Twenty-First Biennial Report for years ending July 31, 1901, and July 31, 1902, School Economy—(a) The Small School, (b) A New Organization in the Country, 155-161, Consolidated Schools, 727-762.

IOWA—Biennial Report of the Department of Public Instruction for the Period ending September 30, 1901, Ch. II, Consolidation of Schools and Transportation of Children, 29-97. (Issued in pamphlet form).

KANSAS—Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Instruction for the years ending June 30, 1901-June 30, 1902, The Consolidation of Rural Schools, 38-48. Circular of Information Regarding Consolidation of Rural Schools, March 1, 1902.

LOUISIANA—Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1900-1901, Attendance, 6-8.

MARYLAND—Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the State Board of Education for the year ending July 31, 1902, Minutes of the Association of School Commissioners of Maryland, Session of 1902—Resolution of State Superintendent commanding consolidation of rural schools, xliii.

MASSACHUSETTS—Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Board of

Education together with the Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board, 1897-1898, Consolidation of Schools and the Conveyance of Children, by G. T. Fletcher, Agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education, 435-459. Sixty-Third Annual Report, 1898-1899, Expense of Conveying Children, 155-159. Sixty-Sixth Report, 1902, Conveyance of Pupils, 101-104.

MICHIGAN—Sixty-Fifth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year 1901, The Rural High School, 5-11; An Investigation of the Centralized Schools of Ohio, 12-30; Transportation of Pupils, 31-34 (issued also in pamphlet form).

MINNESOTA—Twelfth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the school years ending July 31, 1901-1902, Bulletin No. 1—Consolidation of Rural Schools and Transportation of Pupils at Public Expense, 271-290 (issued in pamphlet form).

MISSOURI—Fifty-Third Report of the Public Schools for the year ending June 30, 1902, The Rural School Problem, 4-11.

MONTANA—Circular letter of the state superintendent on The Consolidation of Schools.

NEBRASKA—Sixteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, January, 1901, Transportation of Pupils and Instruction in Neighboring District, 40-42. Seventeenth Biennial Report, January, 1903, The Rural School Problem: A Solution—Consolidation of School Districts, Centralization of Schools, and Public Transportation of Pupils, 400-409. School Buildings and Grounds in Nebraska, Department of Public Instruction, 228-265.

NEW HAMPSHIRE—Fifty-Second Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1902, Consolidation, 278-279.

NEW JERSEY—Annual Report of the State Board of Education and of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the school year ending June 30, 1902, Reports from county superintendents on the transportation of pupils, 59, 84.

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NORTH CAROLINA—Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the school years 1900-1901 and 1901-1902, School Districts, xviii-xxvi; the Rural Schools, Iviii; Signs of Hope and Evidences of Progress, Ix, 3rd paragraph; Consolidation of Districts, 365-373 (Educational Bulletin No. 1).

NORTH DAKOTA—Seventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the two years ending June 30, 1902, Consolidation of Rural Schools, 24-28 (issued in pamphlet form); 300, 303, 291.

NOVA SCOTIA—Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education

for the year ending July 31, 1902, Consolidation of Sections, xi.

OHIO—Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the State Commissioner of Common Schools for the year ending August 31, 1900, Centralization Law, 12-15. Forty-Eighth Annual Report, 1901, Centralization of Schools, 18-19.

ONTARIO—Report of the Minister of Education for the year 1902, The Consolidation of Schools and Transportation of Pupils, xxii-xxvii.

OREGON—Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1902, General Survey of Educational Work, 233-236.

PENNSYLVANIA—Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year ending June 3, 1901, Centralization of Schools, vi-vii. School Laws of Pennsylvania, 1902, Consolidated Districts, 2-4.

QUEBEC—Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year 1901-02, Protestant Schools, xx, xxi.

RHODE ISLAND—Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Public Schools for the year ending April 30, 1901, Size of Schools, 73; Extracts from Reports on Consolidation and Transportation, Appendix, 27, 29, 33-35, 37, 64, 101, 129-131. Public Laws Pertaining to Education, 1903, Ch. 1101, An act providing for the better management of the public schools in the state (in pamphlet form).

SOUTH DAKOTA—Sixth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1901-1902. The Centralization of Rural Schools, 3; circular letter of state superintendent, 15; reports from various counties, 40, 66, 74, 77, 79, 94.

TEXAS—Thirteenth Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the scholastic years ending August 31, 1901, and August 31, 1902, The Real Harmony between the Law and Appropriate Business Methods, etc., 15-16.

VERMONT—Thirty-Seventh School Report of the State Superintendent of Education, October, 1902, Union of Schools and Conveyance of Pupils, 22-24; Educational Thought and Effort, 56; statistics on transportation, 134; county reports, 146, 194, 219, 222.

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THE SITUATION IN NEBRASKA.

BANNER COUNTY.

During the past school year the number of school districts has been reduced from 38 to 34, by uniting to each of two districts adjoining districts, and to a third one two other districts. In the latter case the consolidated district (No. 8) comprises 30 sections of land, with a census of 12 children of school age. The tax levy, enrollment and average daily attendance are practically unaffected, but the term of school is longer. Free transportation is not provided.

District No. 5, two districts united, includes 21 sections, with a school census of 34. Conditions are similar to those in No. 8, and the chief advantage appears to be in a larger, better school.

District No. 7, two districts united, includes 34 sections with a school census of 19. Conditions are similar to those in No. 8 and No. 5, but with a slight increase in enrollment.

MRS. W. E. HEARD.

BOX BUTTE COUNTY.

I have worked for the consolidation of a number of districts during the past year, but without success, although the plan to form 4 districts from 7 is still being agitated, and we hope to succeed before October 1, 1903, after all concerned understand the situation better than at present.

J. W. BAUMGARDNER.

BROWN COUNTY.

Owing to the sparsely settled territory we cannot bring about con-

solidation of districts to any extent at present, but in the more thickly settled parts I think an attempt would be successful if there were some means of meeting the citizens in a systematic way.

ESTELLA M. DANIELS.

BUFFALO COUNTY.

I shall make an effort for the consolidation of two groups of school districts this summer. I have not met with much encouragement in my efforts in the past.

T. N. HARTZELL.

BURT COUNTY.

We have no centralized schools in this county. I have published an article on this subject in several of our county papers. The plan meets with both favor and opposition.

EUGENE BROOKINGS.

BUTLER COUNTY.

I have tried two places in the county, but the main objection given by the patrons is the greater cost of running a consolidated district.*

JOS. C. HRUSHKA.

CEDAR COUNTY.

Four districts were united about two years ago, forming District No. 84, which has 28 sections and a school population of 169. The district still has four schoolhouses and a teacher for each one, as the people have thus far refused to vote bonds for the central schoolhouse.

A. E. WARD.

DAWES COUNTY.

An adjoining district has been consolidated with District No. 25, forming 18 sections with a school population of 30. This consolidation was effected April 1, 1903, and only one teacher will be necessary for the school. Last year the two districts levied 15 and 12 mills respectively, the enrollment in the two schools was 20 and the average daily attendance was 12.

During my term of office twelve districts have been consolidated in Dawes county. There has nearly always been opposition at the time but later entire satisfaction has resulted.

During the past year back taxes have been paid up in many of the districts giving a surplus of funds which has kept several districts from consolidating that would have done so if they had been short. Transportation has never been tried.

H. L. FISHER.

DIXON COUNTY.

Petitions are out for the consolidation of five districts and three have been returned, but the others must have been lost or the people are too busy to attend to them.

MARY MCKINLEY.

*Note—But the income is greater with the same levy, and the school vastly better.

FRONTIER COUNTY.

District No. 32 was discontinued last fall and its territory attached to No. 98, forming a district of 18 sections with 23 pupils of school age. Only one teacher will be necessary.

District No. 18 has been discontinued and attached to District No. 80, except one quarter section which goes to the Maywood district.

About five years ago a district comprising six sections was attached to the Curtis district. This consolidation has proven most unsatisfactory. There are at present two families residing in the portion annexed, six and six-and-one-half miles from school. They could drive to school, but are unwilling to do so. To furnish transportation would cost more than the income derived from their portion of the district. If separated from the Curtis district their income would scarcely maintain the required amount of school. For two years a school has been held for them, four months this year, three months last year, paid for in part by the Curtis district and in part by the parents. Both teachers were beginners. The work was very ordinary, but the pupils' attendance was perfect. This case is a sample "problem."

MRS. CLARA L. DOBSON.

HARLAN COUNTY.

The proposition of disbanding the small schools, or rather of holding no school in the district but sending the pupils to adjoining schools and paying tuition out of district funds, is worthy of consideration. Last year District No. 63 acted upon such advice and voted to hold no school. The following letters from officers of the district tell how well the plan worked. No complaint has reached this office from any patron.

Atlanta, Nebr., April 18, 1903.

Superintendent U. C. Breithaupt—

In reply to your letter must say for my part am perfectly satisfied with the way we managed our school last winter. And as far as I know, the rest are all satisfied. The tuition for all of the pupils all winter didn't cost us any more than it would have cost to pay the teacher one month if we had run our school.

MRS. JOSEPHINE KRASOMIL.

Atlanta, Nebr., April 13, 1903.

Superintendent U. C. Breithaupt—

Your letter of April 2nd has been received; in reply will say that our experience of sending pupils to adjoining schools has been satisfactory the past year. The pupils received seven months' schooling. One boy that attended school in Atlanta missed only one day out of seven months. The cost of tuition is \$41.50. One month's school in our own district would cost nearly that much.

OSCAR LONN.

I believe several districts will follow this plan next year.

U. C. BREITHAUPT.

HAYES COUNTY.

Three districts have been discontinued during the past year, and

their territory united to two others. The new District No. 63 consists of 28 sections, with a school census of 40. One teacher is required instead of two, the tax levy has been reduced from 25 to 15 mills, and the enrollment increased from 30 to 38 pupils.

District No. 25, formed of three united districts, comprises 25 sections, with a school census of 56. The number of teachers necessary has been reduced from three to one, and the former insufficient levy of 25 mills to 20 mills; this would have been reduced still further were it not for old debts. When these are paid off the levy will probably be reduced to 10 mills. The enrollment has increased from 35 to 40.

G. H. PICKETT.

HITCHCOCK COUNTY.

Seven school districts take advantage of the "Contract for the Instruction of Pupils in a Neighboring District" law.

JAMES O'CONNELL.

HOOKER COUNTY.

Districts Nos. 1 and 3 have been consolidated with No. 2, and we are also uniting with No. 2 all unorganized territory, but this is a matter that has not been entirely accomplished, and we have not had any school under the new plan.* The consolidated district comprises 15 townships (540 sections), with a school census of 125. Two teachers will be employed the ensuing year, instead of three as heretofore.

L. H. BROWN.

*Note—I believe Hooker county and several other counties in Nebraska might with profit be consolidated into one school district, the School District of _____ County, with a board of six members, one central school carrying high school work, and as many outlying rural schools as might be necessary.—W. K. Fowler.

KEITH COUNTY.

Districts Nos. 12 and 43 were united last year, forming a district of 42 sections. One teacher is employed, the tax levy has been reduced from 15 to 10 mills, and the enrollment and average daily attendance slightly increased.

WESLEY TRESSLER.

KEYA PAHA COUNTY.

Two districts were united, with a school census of 19. One teacher is employed, the tax levy has been reduced from 25 to 15 mills, while the enrollment has increased from 12 to 18 pupils, and the average daily attendance from 2 to 8 pupils.

In this county we have 58 districts. It seems to me that these should be consolidated so as to make 29. Last year I published two articles on this subject without effect, as it seems every voter wants a schoolhouse within half a mile of his house. Considering the conditions in this county, it would, in my judgment, be better to divide the county into three districts, one in the east, one in the west and one in the center. Build three schoolhouses large enough and teach all the grades from the primary to the twelfth, also erect dormitories and boarding houses for

the pupils, appoint matrons to care for them and not allow any pupil to attend under eight years of age. The same funds that run our present system would support the above. There would be no tardiness, no days absent, no dread of blizzards and no wet feet.

I shall be glad at any time to support anything in the line of consolidation.

JOHN SCHEIE.

LANCASTER COUNTY.

There has been no consolidation effected in this county, but we have one or two precincts where the people ought to be interested, as they are remote from any high school.

W. A. HAWES.

McPHERSON COUNTY.

Our schools are so isolated that consolidation is not practical. Schoolhouses are built where the settlements are. There are children in the county who have no school privileges, on account of distances from the schoolhouses and not enough deeded land or other property with which to run a school. There were two private or subscription schools in the county this past year, and some families moved to towns in adjoining counties for the purpose of sending their children to school. Some districts have two schoolhouses, and in one (No. 3, the Lemley district) school was taught in each school building at different times and some of the pupils were able to attend at both schoolhouses, thereby receiving nine months' schooling. Two-thirds of the county is yet unorganized into school districts.

MRS. BLANCHE E. CLINE.

OTOE COUNTY.

Districts Nos. 14, 15 and 16 were united with the Nebraska City school district some years ago. Transportation is provided for the fifteen pupils of old No. 14 over one wagon route six miles in length.

R. C. KING.

PAWNEE COUNTY.

We have a number of small districts in Pawnee county which I think could, with advantage, be consolidated into larger districts with free transportation. Especially is this true in the western and southwestern portions of the county. I have talked consolidation in places where I thought it especially adapted and I intend to discuss it in our county school journal. I hope we may have consolidated schools in the not far distant future.

J. C. WADDELL.

PERKINS COUNTY.

District No. 82 was annexed to No. 7 forming a district of 36 sections, with a school population of 23 and one teacher, although formerly but one was required as instruction in a neighboring district had been provided under section 4c, subdivision 5 of our school laws.

A. SOFTLEY.

PLATTE COUNTY.

in 1900 district No. 27 was united with district No. 76 (the Monroe school) forming a new district of about 10 square miles, with a school census of 195, requiring three teachers where previously three had been employed. There is one wagon route about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length for 18 children. The levy last year was 25 mills. The enrollment last year was 143 and the average daily attendance 88. Before consolidation the enrollment was 20 and 82 in the two districts, a total of 102, and the average daily attendance was 63. But the town of Monroe has grown considerably since the consolidation was effected.

L. H. LEAVY.

RED WILLOW COUNTY.

We have been making some progress in consolidation. District No. 59, with a valuation of \$6,216, and census of eight pupils has been annexed to District No. 6, the village of Lebanon. District No. 40, with a valuation of \$6,455, census of nineteen pupils, has been annexed to district No. 70, the village of Bartley. Others are talking consolidation.

EUGENE S. DUTCHER.

RICHARDSON COUNTY.

No consolidation is reported but districts Nos. 12 and 36 have closed their schools and contracted with No. 37 (the Humboldt school) under the provisions of section 4c, subdivision 5, for the instruction of their pupils. One district maintains a wagon route about five miles in length and carries eight pupils. All patrons and pupils are well pleased with the plan. I think several districts will make similar contracts next year.

GEO. CROCKER.

SARPY COUNTY.

Two school districts were united last winter at Ft. Crook. The consolidated district comprises about five sections, with a school census of 114 pupils, and four teachers. The district is too new to make comparisons of the new conditions with the previous ones.

G. P. MILLER.

SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY.

Three school districts paid the tuition of their pupils in adjoining districts. One district has recently been increased by the addition of 66 sections of unorganized territory. Four dormant districts (without organization) have money ahead; two others are merely keeping up an organization in order to pay off their indebtedness, when they will unite with other districts. A number of our school districts are in favor of consolidation and are only waiting until things become a little better settled. I think in the next few years more can be done to get the county schools consolidated than ever again, for they are now making changes and talking plans for improving the school buildings, and after they once build it will be a difficult matter to effect the change.

AGNES LACKEY.

SHERIDAN COUNTY.

There has been no consolidation effected during the past year. Some of those that consolidated one year ago or more are expressing considerable dissatisfaction. The entire number of school districts in the county is 107. Through the continual changing of our citizenship and new people coming in, it is likely that a number of the inactive districts will do business again soon.

WALTER R. KENT.

THURSTON COUNTY.

Last year district No. 7 was discontinued and united to fractional district No. 61 of Dakota, Dixon and Thurston counties.

M. A. FENNELL.

YORK COUNTY.

We tried to effect consolidation in Arborville township two years ago—that is, we held two meetings—but the people were afraid of it and we quit. Two or three of our smaller towns are doing some planning but no definite steps have been taken. The town districts want to have surrounding districts unite and keep the school in town. I believe that it can be done—in time.

ED C. BISHOP.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN NEBRASKA.

COUNTY.	No. of districts July, 1902	No. of new districts cre- ated during the year from unorganized ter- ritory			No. of new districts cre- ated by division;	No. of districts discon- tinued during the year by becoming dormant.	No. of districts discon- tinued by consolida- tion with others	No. of districts July, 1903
Adams	78							78
Antelope	113							113
Banner	38						4	34
Blaine	15			1				16
Boone	80			1				81
Box Butte	62					4		58
Boyd	78			1				79
Brown	45							45
Buffalo	119							119
Burt	69							69
Butler	92							92
Cass	101							101
Cedar	80			1				81
Chase	62							62
Cherry	72		1			1		72
Cheyenne	96						1	95
Clay	78							78
Colfax	61							61
Cuming	78							78
Custer	241				2			239
Dakota	38							38
Dawes	92						1	91
Dawson	89							89
Deuel	65					2		63
Dixon	80							80
Dodge	83							83
Douglas	63							63
Dundy	48						2	46
Fillmore	91							91
Franklin	71							71
Frontier	109						1	108
Furnas	103					1	1	101
Gage	157			2				159
Garfield	25							25
Gosper	56							56
Grant	6							6
Greeley	58							58
Hall	73							73
Hamilton	98							98
Harlan	81					1		80
Hayes	60						2	58
Hitchcock	76							76
Holt	188					1		187
Hooker	6						2	4
Howard	71							71
Jefferson	100			1				101

COUNTY.

	No. of districts July, 1902	No. of new districts cre- ated during the year from unorganized ter- ritory	No. of new districts cre- ated by division	No. of districts discon- tinued during year by becoming dormant ..	No. of districts discon- tinued by consolida- tion with others	No. of districts July, 1903
Johnson	79					79
Kearney	69					69
Keith	43				1	41
Keya Paha	58					58
Kimball	19					19
Knox	113		1			114
Lancaster	138					138
Lincoln	110					110
Logan	17					17
Loup	24					24
Madison	78		1			79
McPherson	7					8
Merrick	57					57
Nance	63		2			65
Nemaha	80					80
Nuckolls	91					91
Otoe	102					102
Pawnee	78					78
Perkins	72				1	71
Phelps	76					76
Pierce	67					67
Platte	78					78
Polk	71					71
Red Willow	83					83
Richardson	104					104
Rock	63			1		62
Saline	119					119
Sarpy	41				1	40
Saunders	114					114
Scotts Bluff	28			1		27
Seward	91					91
Sheridan	95			7		88
Sherman	74					74
Sioux	25					25
Stanton	55					55
Thayer	98					98
Thomas	5					5
Thurston	22			1	1	22
Valley	63					63
Washington	55					55
Wayne	80		2			82
Webster	79					79
Wheeler	35					35
York	102					102
Totals	6666	2	14	23	17	6642

Number of school districts in Nebraska by years:

1870	797	1892	6510	1898	6703
1875	2405	1893	6620	1899	6705
1880	3132	1894	6641	1900	6708
1885	4266	1895	6693	1901	6675
1890	6243	1896	6731	1902	6666
1891	6417	1897	6741	1903	6642

SMALL SCHOOLS IN NEBRASKA.

A Detailed Statement of the Number and Distribution of the Small Rural Schools in Nebraska, 1901.

THE PROBLEM: WANTED—A SOLUTION

COUNTY.	Attendance of five pupils or less	Attendance above five but not more than ten	Attendance above ten but not more than fifteen	Attendance above fifteen but not more than twenty
Adams	1	7	14	22
Antelope	9	27	35	20
Banner	9	7	4	0
Blaine	2	4	2	1
Boone	2	18	25	13
Box Butte	12	25	13	2
Boyd	1	12	19	16
Brown	3	17	11	1
Buffalo	6	18	44	26
Burt	1	10	22	20
Butler	2	11	16	32
Cass	2	20	25	22
Cedar	5	14	16	14
Chase	11	22	9	2
Cherry	5	26	14	8
Cheyenne	25	27	16	5
Clay	2	3	21	21
Colfax	2	2	12	20
Cuming	1	10	20	20
Custer	19	82	70	35
Dakota	0	4	17	4
Dawes	15	26	13	6
Dawson	6	14	23	15
Deuel	15	24	7	5
Dixon	1	21	19	24
Dodge	0	7	29	21
Douglas	1	4	14	9
Dundy	8	19	10	5
Fillmore	1	11	17	19
Franklin	7	20	14	1
Frontier	6	30	33	24
Furnas	2	16	39	21
Gage	3	22	55	37
Garfield	2	11	5	3
Gosper	4	15	19	10
Grant	0	3	1	0
Greeley	6	19	15	5
Hall	2	6	20	11
Hamilton	2	11	33	20
Harlan	2	21	24	16
Hayes	9	15	13	9
Hitchcock	11	34	16	6
Holt	58	66	29	14

COUNTY

	Attendance of five pupils or less	Attendance above five but not more than ten	Attendance above ten but not more than fifteen	Attendance above fifteen but not more than twenty	
Hooker	1	0	1	0	
Howard	1	12	15	20	
Jefferson	2	16	30	17	
Johnson	0	10	23	18	
Kearney	0	7	22	14	
Keith	20	15	4	1	
Keya Paha	5	24	16	3	
Kimball	7	4	1	1	
Knox	6	22	34	25	
Lancaster	5	6	32	38	
Lincoln	17	30	25	10	
Logan	2	3	6	2	
Loup	1	9	4	2	
Madison	0	14	20	28	
McPherson	2	2	2	0	
Merrick	4	8	13	15	
Nance	6	18	21	11	
Nemaha	0	7	25	16	
Nuckolls	5	19	19	20	
Otoe	4	19	34	18	
Pawnee	3	6	21	24	
Perkins	31	14	4	22	
Phelps	3	7	30	15	
Pierce	2	16	22	15	
Platte	5	8	22	20	
Polk	0	6	18	20	
Red Willow	9	23	18	14	
Richardson	1	10	24	30	
Rock	10	21	13	2	
Saline	1	11	32	27	
Sarpy	1	4	7	7	
Saunders	0	8	19	37	
Scotts Bluff	3	5	3	5	
Seward	2	14	32	15	
Sheridan	18	39	18	7	
Sherman	5	21	21	11	
Sioux	4	9	5	2	
Stanton	2	13	15	11	
Thayer	4	13	27	18	
Thomas	0	0	0	2	
Thurston	0	5	4	3	
Valley	2	18	20	8	
Washington	0	4	9	21	
Wayne	1	19	30	13	
Webster	0	11	25	19	
Wheeler	12	8	4	1	
York	1	13	24	30	
Totals	489	1352	1687	1243	

These statistics are taken from the annual report of the county superintendents of Nebraska for the school year 1900-1901. They show that the small schools are greater in number than most of us knew. There are 489 schools with an average daily attendance of five or less; 1,841 with ten or less; 3,528 with fifteen or less; 4,771 with twenty or less. There are about 6,300 strictly rural school districts in Nebraska. This makes nearly three-fourths of our rural schools in each of which is an average daily attendance too small for vigorous, interesting and profitable work, either educationally and socially or financially. No time need be spent in rehearsing these facts. No school can claim conditions for good work if it have less than twenty-five pupils; yet there are 4,771 rural schools in Nebraska in operation with an average daily attendance ranging from one to twenty pupils. I believe we are all ready to unite upon this proposition—the pupils in these small rural schools must be collected into larger and better schools with better teachers, better paid. "It does not matter how much we deplore the condition which makes consolidation of schools necessary, the fact remains that it is the only rational solution of the question that has been offered."

THE EMERSON CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

This consolidated school district was formed, by petition, in the spring of 1902, uniting district No. 7 of Thurston county with fractional district No. 61 of Dakota and Dixon counties. The consolidated district consists of 23 sections in Thurston county, $5\frac{1}{2}$ sections in Dixon county and $1\frac{1}{8}$ sections in Dakota county.

Old district No. 7 of Thurston county contained three schoolhouses poorly located. These were moved to new locations and two new school buildings were erected. No bonds were issued nor was any extra tax levy necessary for this purpose.

The tax levy in old district No. 7 of Thurston county had been 25 mills for a number of years. The tax levy in district No. 61 before the consolidation had been 25 mills for two years, or since the number of saloons in Emerson was reduced. The tax levy in the new consolidated district No. 61 is now 25 mills, and three saloons pay \$500 license each. The real estate in Thurston county, being Indian reservation land, is not taxable. The valuations on personal property are much higher in Thurston county than in Dakota and Dixon counties, or, at any rate, more personal property is assessed in Thurston county than in the other counties. A shortage of nearly \$1,000 existed for the past school year, owing to the large expenditures for buildings and new books. If the tax levy is kept at 25 mills, the revenue for next year will be amply sufficient.

We have one central school building, including a high school at Emerson, and five rural schoolhouses. In all of these schools we have uniformity of textbooks and course of study. No work above the eighth grade is permitted in any of the rural schools. All high school work is done in the central building in Emerson. The superintendent visits the

rural schools once each month, and all teachers are required to meet with the superintendent once each month.

E. H. McMILLAN.

THE POWELL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Two school districts were consolidated at Powell, in Jefferson county, Nebraska, in the spring of 1902. The consolidated district comprises ten and eleven-sixteenths square miles. During the school year 1902-1903 about thirty children were transported at an expense of \$198 for the nine months. The total enrollment was 87 pupils, with an average attendance of 51. The total number of children of school age was 90. During the last year before consolidation the total enrollment in the two districts was 64, with an average attendance of 43. Under consolidation there were fewer cases of tardiness and more regular attendance. The cost of maintenance during the first year under consolidation was somewhat increased, but the teachers' salaries were raised ten dollars a month each, and the school is now better equipped in every respect. County Superintendent F. A. Carmony and Principal C. W. Samms both speak of the plan in the highest terms and say it is a success in every particular.

A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL.

Ruskin is the high school of a consolidated school district in Jackson county, Missouri. Four common school districts united to form the present district. The formation was made April, 1902. The district is about five and one-half miles square and lies in a practically level country, mainly agricultural. The present enumeration for the entire system of schools is 320, an increase of 60 pupils since its formation.

The enrollment in the high school last year amounted to about thirty pupils for the entire year. The average daily attendance, notwithstanding the severest winter for travel we have had for ten years, is in excess of the average for the entire county, including the village and town schools. Pupils furnish their own conveyances, riding or driving a distance of one to five miles.

The school has been highly satisfactory and has stimulated a most commendable pride in the rural schools of that section. Not only is interest taken in the high school, its property and environment, but equal interest has been aroused in the several grammar grade schools. Money is willingly and judiciously expended to make the schools better. Yards are kept in good condition—all yards were previously provided with shade except the high school. One hundred fifty trees were planted here Arbor Day under the direction of a landscape gardener employed for that purpose; the yard includes four acres.

Another year an additional teacher will be added, after which three years' high school work will be carried. When the second teacher is engaged the eighth grade will also be taken from the other schools, giving each high school teacher two grades in addition to relieving the grammar schools.

The board is thoroughly imbued with the idea of making the school distinctively rural in its course of study. It expects as fast as the change can be made to teach the elements of agriculture, introducing it into the other schools in the nature of observation work.

There is a strong sentiment in the district in favor of centralization of the five schools and transporting the pupils at public expense. It is probable the General Assembly at its next session will enact such a law. If it does there is little doubt that this county will have at least one centralized school, with pupils transported, within three years.

Nor does the one district represent all the sentiment in favor of consolidation in the county. Other places have tried but have failed thus far to carry it. They will continue to try and their success in the near future is practically assured.

W. H. JOHNSON.

Independence, Mo.

RURAL SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION.

W. M. Hayes, Professor of Agriculture, University of Minnesota.

The writer recently made a two days' trip into the country south of Andover, Ashtabula county, Ohio, to study the problem of rural school consolidation. One object was to learn more about the relation of consolidation of schools and the problem of introducing into such schools studies relating to agriculture, rural home making, and country life.

Four consolidated schools were visited and on the whole the plan seemed to be a material improvement. The evidence was strong that the minority who at first objected to consolidation of schools are gradually being converted to the new system. The cost to the township is higher than formerly, but the cost per student in daily attendance is less. There is more schooling secured, because there is more regularity in attendance, less tardiness, and the pupils remain in school a greater number of years. The expense to the farmers is less than in sending their children away from home for studies of a high school grade. The teaching is more effective, because of better superintendence, better grading of work, and more concentration and specialization on the part of teachers.

The townships are five miles square, and in three of the four places visited, the school is located at the cross roads, at or near the center of the township. Usually near the consolidated school one finds a country store, a blacksmith shop, and a post-office. The fourth place visited was a village of 1,500 inhabitants. The village school district includes a few square miles of surrounding country. The country people have built their separate school at one end of the village. In this case the movement to consolidate with the village school failed to pass the vote at the county election.

These townships are in a district of heavy clay soil and the roads are at times very muddy. Though well graded, they are not graveled. One school proposes to have a vacation of one month in the spring until the roads are dry. Ordinarily, one school van is required for each original

sub-district. It was interesting to see the children clamber into eight or nine school vans, or "kid wagons" as the people call them. Each of the owners of vans receives for service nearly the same salary as a grade teacher, or thirty dollars per month. The salary of the van owner varies with the distance traveled and the character of the roads on the respective routes. The vans are plain, light farm wagons with a band wagon box. They are provided with top and side curtains. The children are better cared for than where they must take long walks to school. The pupils can dress to keep out the cold and parents know that their children are taken directly to school. The driver sits on a stool inside the van and keeps good order.

The schoolhouses are two-story wooden or brick buildings with four or five rooms, costing \$4,500.00 to \$6,000.00 each. High basement rooms are provided in which the children can play. Each school is provided with two or three acres of ground. The play grounds have been well graded. No trees have as yet been planted. Very little is being done in decorating the grounds with ornamental shrubbery. The rooms in the lower story are used for pupils doing graded work, and the rooms in the upper story are used for pupils doing high school work.

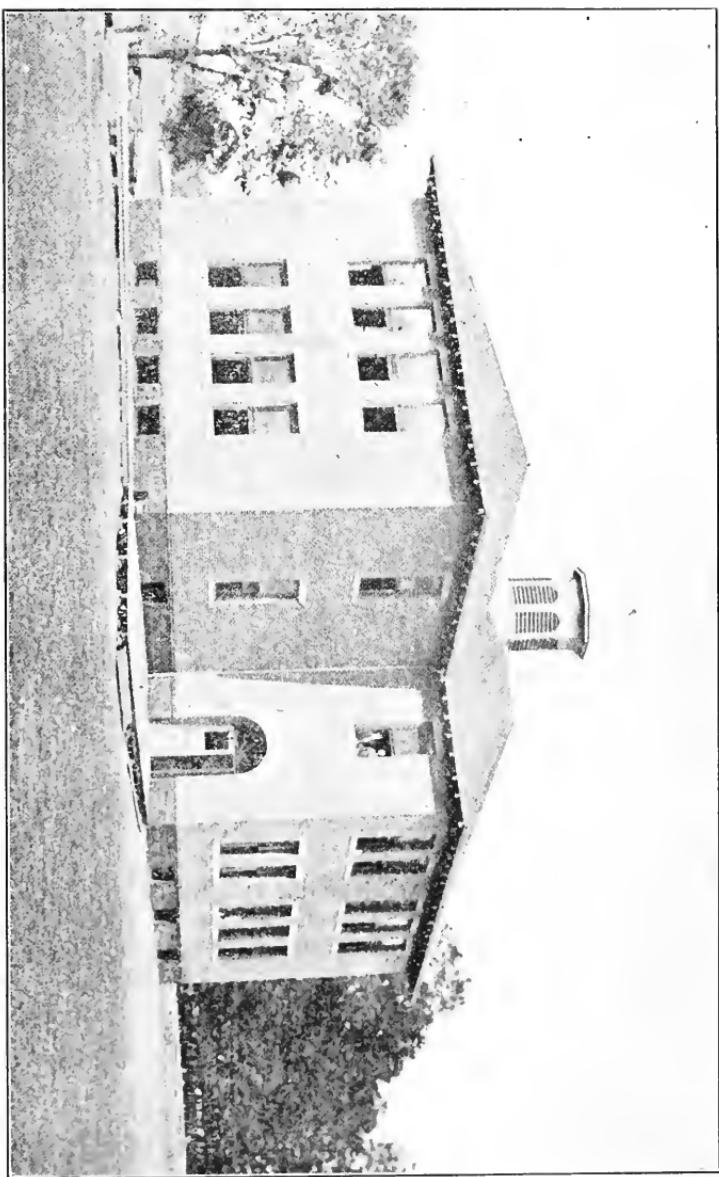
The course of study is quite general. The sciences, such as chemistry, physics, and botany are lightly touched upon. The principals in these schools receive \$65.00 to \$80.00 per month; assistant principals, \$35.00; and other teachers, \$30.00. Though the soil is generally good, the country beautiful and well improved, many of the vigorous farm boys are leaving the farm for the cities. The schools were doing more to accelerate this exodus than to instill into the pupils an appreciation of the industrial and other possibilities of their truly beautiful country.

In private conversation, or with chalk in hand, before the high school pupils the writer assisted the principals in mapping out possible ten acre school farms beside these schools. These plans usually included a modest cottage for the principal, possibly with a room so equipped that his wife could teach classes in sewing and cooking. A small stable was planned for at least a cow and a few pigs. Nearby was to be built a chicken house. Play grounds were surrounded by different varieties of trees and shrubs. A small area in front of the schoolhouse was designed for an ornamental lawn. A small orchard was planned where could be planted one or more trees of numerous varieties of apples, peaches, and other fruits. The proposed garden plot contained space for growing vegetables and small fruits and places for cold frames in which to start early plants. Nearly half the land was divided up into half acre plots for field crops.

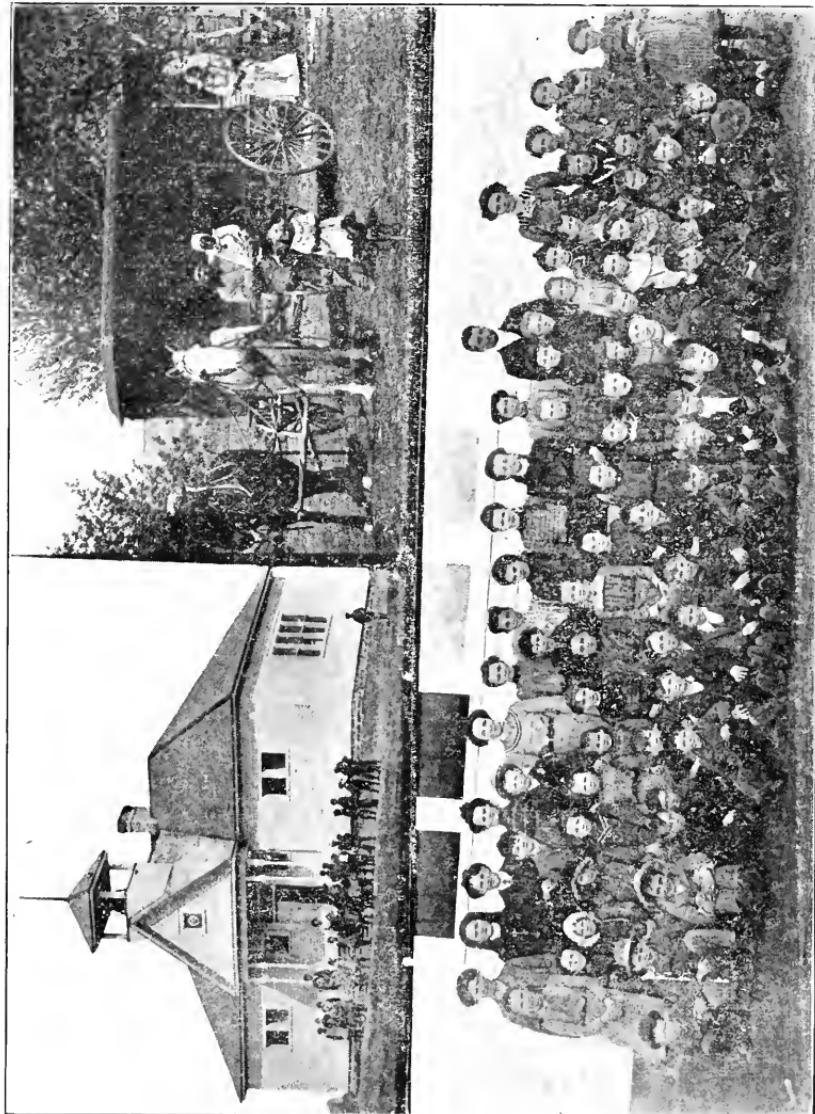
The principals, teachers, and pupils seemed interested in the general plan of school grounds outlined, and in many of the special features which were woven into a scheme to connect the work of the school with their home interests. The writer, in studying the point of view of these teachers and pupils, was impressed with the belief that this general line of work offers large opportunities.

An argument for preserving the identity of the rural schools: Let the city schools work more toward the city industries and let the country schools emphasize country industries. This work, once it is properly organized, will soon become more interesting than some of the studies of the common branches. But it has been proven that this kind of work has in many cases assisted the pupils in their general scholarship.

In these townships a "sugar bush" is found on every farm, along highways and streams. The hard maple is found in rows, in groups, and growing singly. Other trees, including clumps of grand evergreens, are growing about the old farmsteads. Not even in the scenes of autumnal colorings in Minnesota has the writer seen such beauty. Land sells from \$25.00 to \$40.00 per acre in this region. The normal value is nearly double these prices. The people are seeking city life, and the schools are helping to educate them for city life, rather than to train them for making the most of this most beautiful country.—School Education, Minneapolis.



Centralized School, Green Township, Trumbull County, Ohio



Centralized School, Powell, Jefferson County, Nebraska. The new building, a conveyance and the children.



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